

---

Japan, America, and the Chinese Revolution

Author(s): Frederick McCormick

Source: *The Journal of Race Development*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jul., 1912), pp. 43-54

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737939>

Accessed: 17/07/2014 19:28

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



<http://www.jstor.org>

## JAPAN, AMERICA, AND THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

*By Frederick McCormick, Special Correspondent,  
Peking, China*

The question of foreign influence upon the Chinese is more easily defined in the case of Japan than in that of any other outside nation. All through Chinese history, art and architecture, since the Middle Ages of Europe, is traced and scattered the impression and work of foreign men and ideas. From the Nestorians to the Italian legate at Peking, from Friar John and Rubriques to Marco Paolo; from the Italian, Belgian and French missionaries of the sixteenth century to the envoys of the powers and the modern traders, missionaries, physicians and educators; comes a curious patch-work of foreign and western influence curiously recognized and known by the Chinese. But Japan's definite and forcible impression upon China dates only from the Boxer war or later and is not ten years old.

When I first went to China, in 1900, I lodged for a time in the Provincial College of Chihli, at Paotingfu. I was a guest of the chancellor, who had a curiosity to know what was the place occupied by the Japanese among the allies in China. He said that the college several years previous to that time, had a Japanese student who made a very good impression by his work in the Chinese classics, but that he had been entrusted with 400 taels of the college funds, with which to buy printing paper in Japan, had taken the money, departed for his native land to make the purchase, had never returned, and had neither forwarded the paper nor accounted for the money. He was under the impression that the Japanese had borrowed their prestige from their western associates and slipped into China under the foreign mantle. Although the so-called Japan-China war had intervened, this was a fair sample of the

knowledge possessed among Chinese respecting the Japanese, and it may be said that in 1900 Japan was, to the Chinese, merely a country that had taken everything from China, except modern ideas, and warfare, and given nothing in return.

As beneficiaries of Chinese civilization, the Japanese have an intercourse with China extensive in its history. Japan's travelers, pilgrims, geographers, warriors and traders, however, appear to have left no great impression upon the Chinese, and in the light of China's revolutionary present situation, may be passed over. China took all too little account of the Japan-China war of 1894-1896, and in fact, began to realize Japan's importance only through the reputation which Japan had in the West. Japan's modern appearance on the continent of Asia came first in Korea, where she made a modern treaty in accordance with western practice (her first on her own initiative), in the seventies. What we call civilized diplomatic relations between Japan and China, and the establishment of legations by China and Japan in their two capitals, was brought about largely by an American missionary, Dr. Davie Bethune McCartee. Japan was only established on the mainland through events growing out of the conflict of foreign interests in Korea; and in Fukien, opposite Formosa, which she took from China by the Japan-China war, and it was only after 1900 that the Japanese may be said to have fully established themselves in all the treaty ports. At the end of the first decade of the century, Japanese were in the majority among foreigners at every treaty port and treaty mart north of Chefoo. At Tien Tsin their colony grew at the rate of 200 annually. An interesting exchange of official inquiry took place between Russia and Japan in 1910 respecting their subjects in the Chinese treaty marts on the Siberian frontier, that shows Japanese colonization to have become a political question of considerable acuteness. The complications of the Russo-Japanese question led Russia to ask Japan why she had sent a consul to Aigun on the Amur River. Japan replied that it was because she had 250 subjects there. She retorted by asking Russia why

Russia had sent a consul to Chientao on the Korean frontier. Russia could only reply that it was because she had 4 subjects there (including the consul). All this is a part of the expansion of Japan expressed in various words and phrases but best comprehended in the term, Greater Japan.

A corresponding apprehension in the Chinese, at Japan's expansion in this particular, has been expressed in almost innumerable protests on the part of China to Japanese expansion in Manchuria after the Russo-Japanese war, and in my observation and recollection reached a noteworthy stage, when in 1908, China complained of, and was alarmed by, Japanese military surveys in the region of the Great Wall, and in Mongolia. It was at this time that the government in Peking began to feel the full force of reform ideas among students returning from foreign lands, and in masses from Japan, and the late empress-dowager, coincident with the question of the education of Chinese in America, under the scheme by which America restored her share of the Boxer indemnity, stated that China must send fewer young men to Japan, because those going to Japan largely became revolutionaries.

There are no satisfactory statistics respecting Japanese origins in the Chinese revolution, nor any so far as I know, that are not misleading. But it will give some idea to state that perhaps 20,000 Chinese reformers and students have gotten their ideas for revolution in Japan. As disturbers of the Chinese system and of the central government at Peking, they have been to the front in China since 1903, when the empress-dowager had one of them, Shen Chin, beaten to death with a stave in the imperial prison beside the palace gates. They have grown to be the master revolutionists of China. Their unsuspected power of organization if not of agitation, coupled with the support of the gentry especially in Hunan, have made China into something remarkably new altogether.

The progressive movement in China embracing both the republicans and monarchists is a movement of Chinese enlightened by all western countries, but the facts are that the foremost revolutionaries in the rebellion of September

and November, 1911, and in the incidents where force and violence leading up to it, have been employed, come from the Chinese revolutionary and reform school in Japan. I recall a plot by Chinese students returned from Japan to assassinate the empress-dowager. It came intimately before my observation, because I had occasion to persuade a student friend, who had been educated in another land, to stay out of this particular conspiracy. Japan's influence over the Chinese student has been inevitable, and it is no derogation of the Japanese to say that influences developed on their shores have manifested themselves in revolution on the Asian continent, in political conspiracy, arson, assassination, murder and other crimes. These are the accompaniments of revolution assignable primarily to the leaven of western ideas. Certain chapters in the history of Japan on the continent have inspired Japan's critics to attribute to her certain responsibilities for this rebellion in China which they are doubtless not prepared to prove. There is nothing to show that Japanese have in China violated their right of sanctuary, as was done in Korea when the Korean queen was murdered. The rebellion in China, mainly due to the endeavors of reformers and revolutionaries, who had been to Japan, and whose organizations for revolution were developed there, furnishes records of events in the setting up of the so-called Republic of China that are quite clear. In Szechuan, the largest and wealthiest province of China where the rebellion opened, a large percentage of the members of the provincial assembly were students returned from Japan and one of them Pu Tien-chun their leader was president of the Assembly. No other assembly in China was more free in its criticisms of the imperial authorities. In constitutional matters it had a struggle with the viceroy and won. It espoused the grievances and causes of the revolutionaries in Hunan and Hupeh provinces who executed the main revolt at Wuchang, and its leaders organized the Anti-Foreign-Loan Society bringing about the first rebellious outbreak.

Rebellion found its first strong soil in Hunan which had long had the name of being the most incorrigible and anti-

foreign province of China, for ten years suspected of connection with important revolutionary outbreaks of which the destruction of a railway carriage by a bomb and wounding of several high officials at Peking, 1905, and the assassination of the Governor of Anhui province in 1907 were most noteworthy. Yang Tu a Japan-schooled Hunanese was then the leader of the younger or reform party whose agitation among the Chinese students in Japan (where anarchy had already established itself) caused the so-called "strong man of China" Yuan Shih-kai, to offer him office in order to arrest his revolutionary work, or control it. He attached himself to Yuan Shih-kai only after the rebellion was successful.

Hunan and Hupeh provinces furnish almost the whole history of the rise of the rebellion. Their reformers opposed the government's policy of central ownership of railways and industrial development of China by the employment of foreign capital. This opposition held up the famous "Hukang Loan" for the building of a trunk line railway in three directions out of Hankow. The gentry of Hunan who have always been the most powerful of the gentry class in China, convinced by the foreign or Japanized young men of their province took the responsible headship of this opposition and the outbreak of the rebellion, the most important rebellion from the foreign standpoint that China has ever had, resulted. It is of greater consequence to China than the mere change of dynasty and to a degree is a monument to the Chinese revolutionaries schooled in Japan.

The place of Japan in China's revolution now and the place which Japan will have on the continent of Asia hereafter, finds its definite, comprehensive explanation in the history of the question (since the signing of the Portsmouth treaty) of Manchuria, a word in which all discussion of the affairs of the nations in Eastern Asia ends. Japan's place in the affairs of Eastern Asia must be immense, as all can conceive. What is it?

I have already called attention to the fact that rebellion broke out in the industrial region that is the center of

foreign European and American loan operations due to revolutionaries largely of the Japanese school. Japan is not a capitalistic nation but a military one that leans upon opportunity. Her field since the Russo-Japanese war has been that of chance and fortunate opportunity out of which she has made empire. And now revolution has favored her policy and interests in this particular that rebellion has come in the center of the interests of the capitalistic powers, her antagonists, disconcerting them and absorbing their attention, while she is free with her right of military pacification in her own sphere in China to protect and promote her own interests and policies. I believe these have never been fairly nor with any degree of accuracy or completeness defined. They are as follows:

Two great railways traverse Manchuria, one the whole distance east and west, the other nearly the whole length north and south, both together forming a matrix and conveying Russian and Japanese territorial sovereignty to all Manchuria's vital parts. When the Portsmouth treaty was signed in New Hampshire, it became the immediate business of Japan and Russia, between whom these railways were divided, to keep apart. With their usual alertness the Japanese were foremost in this problem. Before Komura left the United States for Japan, Marquis Ito jumped to the solution of this problem by giving Edward H. Harriman, the American financier and promoter, a tentative agreement for lease to American financiers of Japan's railway in Manchuria, taken from Russia. This would have placed America between Russia and Japan. It would have solved, in a manner, the question of non-entanglement with Russia, so far as Japan was concerned. Ito believed Japan could not hold her Manchurian territories; he thought Japan was moving beyond her depth.

Immediately after the exchange of this tentative agreement, Komura arrived in Tokio and from thence date two Japans, the passing one that of Ito, the other that of Komura. Komura said Japan must expand on the continent in China, and this expansion had sufficient political basis only in the rights which Japan had acquired from



Russia by coming into possession of a share of her railways in Manchuria. Japan could not turn her railway over to others, she must cling to all she had acquired in order to share all the rights and advantages enjoyed by Russia; Russia must be supported and made to cling to all she held and had claimed in Manchuria, and on the Chinese frontier, so as to give a basis for Japan's continental expansion. Japan thereupon abandoned the Ito-Harriman agreement and found in her Manchurian railway a tie and not a breach with Russia. The reasons are as follows:

In the hour of Komura's diplomatic defeat at Portsmouth respecting a war indemnity, which the people of Japan demanded as a condition of peace, he secured the insertion in the secret minutes of the Peace treaty, the obligation, on the part of Russia (as a part of the transfer of the railway) to communicate to Japan upon ratification of the treaty, all agreements which she had with China, respecting Manchuria. When the transfer of these agreements took place, it was found that the contract for the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway, signed in 1896, contained a clause known as "Article VI" which gave to Russia the sole and exclusive right of administration in the railway zone. Komura saw, as well as did a majority of the emperor's advisers, that if this article could be appropriated for effect on the Japanese railways, and recognized by Russia, it was in effect a division of sovereignty among China, Russia, and Japan, in Manchuria. This fact, joined to the fact that Russia's special frontier trade rights were capable of similar extension so as to benefit Japan, gave to Japan her present "Plan of State" upon which Greater Japan rests. Japan now had new statesmen who saw that Russia and Japan possessed and could maintain a special position in northern China, perhaps in spite of all opposition. Japan's problem now was to bring about a written tie between Russia and Japan as against a separation which the ideas and policy of Ito involved. Japan passed, in her policy, to the Komura or so-called Katsura or war party, which was, in fact, nothing more than a Greater Japan party, whose program necessitated peace.



It took four years for Komura to bring about an entente and agreement with Russia which, after many vicissitudes, was obtained July 4, 1910, when Japan's aim was secured by a compact to maintain the status quo in Manchuria, which no power has yet essayed directly to disturb. The story of this four years is one of diplomatic pursuit of Russia by Japan, and is one of the most curiously interesting in the annals of diplomacy. Its details are too numerous to give here. Suffice to say that Russia evaded Japan's pursuit until forced by circumstances to accept the terms of the situation as viewed by Japan. There is one aspect of this, in the main subterranean, struggle between Japan and Russia which deserves to be noted here. Russia learned of the Ito-Harriman agreement, and essayed to imitate Ito's success in getting American finance into Manchuria. She offered her own railway in Wall Street, and failed at much expense to her pride. Russia's evasion of Japan in this issue was due to fear of the consequences of the Japanese invasion of northern Manchuria, and her diplomatic action showed that she was sparring for time.

It was not long before Japan then discovered Russia's intentions respecting the Russian railway in Manchuria, which clearly were in effect the annulment of "Article VI" by transfer of her railway to a country that would interpret its provisions favorable to Chinese sovereignty, thus preventing any wholesale exercise of Japanese sovereignty in Manchuria, and the wholesale extension of Japanese settlement there. The success of Russia's intention was the greatest blow which Russia could direct at Japan's "Plan of State." In consequence Japan did everything to prevent it. In 1908, after repeated failures to open negotiations with Russia on the subject, Japan sent Baron Goto to St. Petersburg, and another officer to Harbin, with a view to opening negotiations. Russia refused to be engaged. Japan tried in 1909, through her ambassador, Motono, to bring the matter up again at St. Petersburg and failed. Russia's situation from that point on was one of acute embarrassment. Japan invoked the complicated and almost omniscient weapons of the doctrine of equal

rights against Russia, and succeeded in pushing Japanese commerce and communications to the Amur River by way of its Manchurian tributaries. Russia was literally forced along by Japan. At the same time, Russia employed every means to dispose of her railway, and what Russia would do in this respect was in 1908-09 a burning question in Tokio. Fearful that Russia would give up the principle of administration in the railway zone, which, at that time, became an issue with all the powers, Japan sent Marquis Ito to Russian Manchuria to meet the Russian minister of finance, Kokovtseff (later the Russian premier). This is a strange story. Ito was assassinated before he had introduced at Harbin the object of his mission. Ito was opposed to expansion until Japan could recuperate from the effects of the war with Russia. Almost to the last as is well known he denied that Japan would annex Korea, believing that his advice and that of his associates, would prevail with the emperor. He was now a changed statesman. Japan had a new spirit, and he was on an errand for his late opponents. This is the great story of Ito's last days and of his assassination. He became a martyr. It was strangely fitting, strange as life itself, that he should, after being defeated in his own plan of state, lend a hand to that of his political adversaries and lose his life in behalf of their policies.

Ito's death saved Russia from one more embarrassment, and events followed that further delayed the inevitable rapprochement and compact with Japan. America was observing this drama, and, unable to promote singly the policies of these two contending powers, devised a plan to meet general necessities in Manchuria; not only of China and Russia, but of what she considered the best interests of Japan. This was the famous "neutralization proposal." The government at Washington proposed the purchase and neutralization of both the Japanese and Russian railways, by the powers. This proposal forced Russia to face the issue of a division of sovereignty in Manchuria, which was now so complicated by the formal representations and opposition of the United States, Great Britain, France and

Germany that Russia was isolated, and seeing no friendly hand held out to her but that of Japan, she accepted it. Fearing the consequences of abandoning "Article VI," and expecting more from its permanency under the Japanese, she signed with Japan, on July 4, 1910, as already stated, an agreement to maintain it and Japan thus established what she had set out to establish, the corner-stone of her empire in China.

Much paper has been written over by Japan and all the great European powers, setting up the principle of equal rights and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China. It has been often said that these papers, called alliances and treaties, are the guarantee of these principles. But that is not the case. These papers so extensively written over are in a state of progressive cancellation and have become so contradictory that governments like our own now depend upon a reiteration of statement in the form of communiques, interpretations and other exchanges of correspondence after the drawing up of each new "entente," "agreement" or "convention," to determine where the parties to these numerous written papers stand on the questions of equal right and Chinese integrity and sovereignty. And the great fact brought out by the revolution is a special position which Japan has made for herself, both territorially and diplomatically, within the borders of the Chinese Empire.

Previous to 1909 the United States government was so negligent of eastern Asia that it was not in possession of the facts. It was so far behind the situation that it had to employ heroic means in behalf of its great principles there. "Article VI" had been exchanged by Russia to Japan at Portsmouth under its nose. When the government at Washington in 1909 started in to rebuild the "open door" structure of John Hay it didn't have that now famous article. It was only when it pressed Russia on the question of administration at Harbin in Manchuria where Russia had created a local Russian government on Chinese soil, that Russia gave to America that article. That was in 1909-1910, thirteen years after it was written. America

then put forward the "neutralization proposal"—a very great measure which it was better that it made and lost than that it should never have made.

These things altogether are the anatomy of the war scare in the Pacific and that almost entirely are the causes of the peace movement in its present aspect. A proper understanding of these things which to the general reader appear more technical than physical nevertheless are more important than any propaganda such as the peace movement for obviating war in the Pacific because familiarity with physical and diplomatic geography in eastern Asia will give confidence while peace propaganda is an opiate that will bring terror when the actual trial between facts occurs. Peace or war is neither here nor there. The idea that Americans know the things with which they deal and can settle them is an infinitely greater idea than the idea of peace.

The great bulking of Japan in the forefront of the Chinese revolution, in its various rôles and aspects, has led to a lot of thinking on the part of the western powers and notably of the United States government. And it is not to be marveled at that Japan's enemies have attributed to her the precipitation of rebellion in China, and aggressive aims and intentions. This subject is one in which time must have way, for few serious students of such great affairs would venture now to speculate upon it. I only wish to say that, to anyone acquainted with the nature of the machinery of a nation's expansion, and especially of the nature of the machinery of Japanese expansion which her statesmen themselves cannot control, the situation has almost every possibility. Japan must be, and I take it for granted that she is, leagues ahead of other nations in appreciation of, and interest in, the Chinese revolution and its responsibilities and opportunities. She has set firmly up the principle of a division of sovereignty in the Chinese Empire. With fine contempt she went to war to demolish it when it was merely a Russian assumption. She then set it up again not as a Japanese assumption, or a Russian-Japanese assumption, but by a Russo-Japanese compact contained in a preliminary exchange of notes and

in a formal convention. Any Japanese may well pause at his country's responsibilities on the Asian continent and the possibilities to which it is heir and to which it is bound.

The subject is one of great magnitude, and I have reached the limits in the discussion which I have intended. If it seems necessary in order to dispose of the subject to show the latest phase of its concern to us as Americans, I would say that now, when all issues between nations in Eastern Asia appear to have been thrown into the melting pot, America has been placed in a splendid position in China by the able diplomacy and enterprise of its government. Singular as it may seem the two countries of the United States and Japan at the opening of the revolutionary change in that ancient nation, aside from the special interests of Japan in China, actually occupy a common platform and position in eastern Asia respecting China's struggle to restore order and unity. It is because of the necessity of peace to Japan. There is in the situation resulting from this necessity the possibility at least for some time of a closer understanding and relation between the United States and Japan respecting China, certainly so if one or more outside powers do not precipitate military occupation of some part of China and Japan remains content to allow her continental interests to be developed by the natural course of events.